



Summer 2003

Planning for Emergencies!

O F C

An early childhood education agency

Keeping Children Safe



As federal, state, and local authorities continue to stress the importance of emergency planning, keeping children safe in child care settings remains a top priority for the Office for Children. We will work with child care providers and centers to develop emergency response plans which are now **required** for all:

- Permitted family child care providers.
- State licensed providers and child care centers who participate in the Child Care Assistance and Referral program and the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program.

This issue of *Update* provides basic information to help you develop an emergency response plan for the following situations:

- Sheltering-in-place
- Evacuation

Your emergency response plan will require that you:

- ☒ Select a safe location appropriate to the type of emergency.
- ☒ Create an emergency disaster kit with enough food, water, medications and other essentials to last for three to five days.
- ☒ Develop an emergency communication plan that includes contact information (reviewed by families every six months) for all families you are serving.

Practicing fire drills and other emergency procedures will help you and the children in your care respond more quickly and calmly if a real emergency occurs.

Update

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- Evacuation
- Preparing a disaster supplies kit
- Emergency contacts
- Helping children cope with emergencies

When Disaster Strikes You Need a Plan!

We may not be able to prevent disasters, but we can plan for them.

A disaster plan will help you think clearly and act quickly to protect yourself and the children in your care when disaster strikes. Consult closely with parents when you develop your disaster plan and make sure you have up-to-date emergency contact information for the children.

How would you respond to the disaster situations below?

SHELTER-IN-PLACE

There is a chemical spill in your neighborhood. The air outside is poisonous. Authorities tell you to

shelter-in-place. Shelter-in-place means you must remain in your home and protect yourself until it is safe to go outside again.



What To Do:

- Lock all windows and exterior doors.
- Close vents and fireplace dampers. Turn off all fans and heating and air conditioning systems.
- Locate your shelter-in-place supplies and make sure your battery-powered radio is working.
- Go to an interior room without windows that is above ground level. Some chemicals are heavier than air and may seep into basements.
- Using duct tape, seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room. Include space around pipes. (If no interior room is available, seal windows with plastic sheeting and duct tape.)
- Listen to the radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.

EVACUATION

Flames are climbing up the kitchen wall behind the stove. Your fire extinguisher will not put out the fire. You can feel the intense heat. You have to get out of the house fast!

Not only your home, but the whole neighborhood may go up in flames! Authorities order you and your neighbors to evacuate the area.

What To Do:

- Collect the children and your evacuation supplies and follow your child care fire drill plan to exit the house quickly and safely.
- Take the children to a predetermined location, such as a neighbor's house, call the fire department and the children's families.

If your neighborhood is evacuated, follow the steps above and then:

- Listen to your battery-powered radio and follow the instructions of local emergency officials. Only use specified travel routes – do not use shortcuts because certain areas may be dangerous to drive through.
- If you do not own a vehicle or drive, learn in advance what your community's arrangements are for those without transportation.



Preparing a Disaster Supplies Kit

Food and water might be hard to get in a disaster. Most experts recommend having enough food, water, medications, first aid supplies, and other essentials in your home to last three to five days. Keep the items in one easy-to-carry container such as a clean trash can or a plastic storage bin. Keep a smaller quantity of supplies in a back pack or duffel bag in case you have to evacuate the house quickly. The following lists give specific items to be included.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE SUPPLIES

- Children's medical and emergency contact information
- A cell phone (if available)
- A three-to-five day supply of bottled water (one gallon per person per day) and food that will not spoil, such as canned foods. (Include a manual can opener.)
- One change of clothing and shoes and one blanket per child
- A first aid kit and prescription medications
- A battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
- Paper products (cups, plates, paper towels) and plastic utensils
- Sanitation supplies including diapers, toilet paper, wipes, soap, plastic garbage bags, and disinfectant
- Latex gloves
- Safety/water proof matches
- Duct tape
- Plastic sheeting
- Paper, markers, books, games for children
- Whistle



EVACUATION SUPPLIES

- Children's medical and emergency contact information
- A cell phone (if available)
- Flashlight, battery-powered radio, extra batteries
- First aid kit and prescription medications
- Water and healthy snack foods
- Blankets and tarps
- Diapers, wipes, and tissues
- Trash bag
- Paper, markers, books, games for children

FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Include the following items in your first aid kit:

- Emergency contact information
- First aid instructions
- Adhesive strip bandages, assorted sizes
- Non-stick sterile pads
- Adhesive tape
- Two or more triangular bandages
- Thermometer
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Small flashlight (with batteries)
- CPR disposable mouthpiece
- Disposable latex gloves
- Special health items for special health needs (for example, epi pins)
- Syrup of Ipecac
- Antibacterial ointment, antiseptic cleansing solution
- Bulb syringe
- Insect bite/sting preparations

Note: First aid kits should be kept locked and out of reach of children.

Emergency Contact Information

It is important to keep contact information available in both your home and in your emergency or field trip kits on forms like the sample included in this *Update*. Ask parents to check the accuracy of the information every six months. Information should include:

- Phone numbers to reach parents at work and at home.
- Current phone numbers and names of individuals at a parent's place of work who can locate parents if they are not at their phones.
- Current phone numbers and names of relatives or neighbors who are authorized to pick up a child in an emergency.
- Current phone numbers and names of physicians of children in your care.

Note: Make sure your parents have an alternate phone number where you can be contacted in a emergency. This might be your cell phone, or a neighbor's house where you would take children in an emergency.

Helping Children Cope with Emergencies

Young children depend on routine in their daily lives. When emergencies interrupt these routines, children may become anxious, frightened, or fearful. Children can show their emotions in various ways, including:

- Withdrawing or becoming unusually quiet.
- Losing their appetite.
- Having nightmares.
- Shouting or crying.

Children also may imagine dangers. These imaginary fears and anxieties should be taken seriously. Encourage children to talk about their fears. If possible, comfort them with facts.

Children want reassurance and guidance from adults in emergency situations. They will feel safer when you:

- Act calmly, but seriously.

- Talk with them about what is happening and what you are going to do.
- Listen to their questions and provide honest information about their concerns.

Teaching children what to do in an emergency and practicing fire drills and other emergency procedures also shows children that you are there to keep them safe.

Information on the Web

Fairfax County

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/

Virginia Emergency Management

www.vdem.state.va.us/

US Department of Homeland Security

www.ready.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency

www.fema.gov/

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/